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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/739,237	12/19/2000	Takashi Usukura	PNDF-00146	4460

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YOUNG & THOMPSON
745 SOUTH 23RD STREET 2ND FLOOR
ARLINGTON, VA 22202

EXAMINER

NGUYEN, VAN KIM T

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2661

DATE MAILED: 02/25/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/739,237

Applicant(s)

USUKURA, TAKASHI

Examiner

Van Kim T. Nguyen

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 December 2000.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 3.4.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

This Office Action is responsive to communications filed on December 19, 2000.

Claim Objections

Claim 3 and 5 are objected to because of the following informalities:

Claim 3 recites the limitation "the first and second convergence notice signals" in lines 5-

6. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

Claim 1 is a single means claim, i.e., where a means recitation does not appear in combination with another recited element of means, is subject to an undue breadth rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph. In re Hyatt, 708 F.2d 712, 714-715, 218 USPQ 195, 197 (Fed. Cir. 1983) (A single means claim which covered every conceivable means for achieving the stated purpose was held nonenabling for the scope of the claim because the specification

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disclosed at most only those means known to the inventor.). When claims depend on a recited property, a fact situation comparable to Hyatt is possible, where the claim covers every conceivable structure (means) for achieving the stated property (result) while the specification discloses at most only those known to the inventor.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 2 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding claim 2, the term "too much" in claim 2 is a relative term which renders the claim indefinite. The term "too much" is not defined by the claim, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention.

Regarding claim 4, the term "too wide" in claim 4 is a relative term which renders the claim indefinite. The term "too wide" is not defined by the claim, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 3, and 5-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Maeno (US 4,942,569).

Regarding claims 1, 3, and 6, as shown in Figures 1-11, Maeno discloses a priority control method using a single output queue (1012), a queue control mean (101A, 101B), and a back/forth packet comparison and exchange means (102), wherein an output priority of a packet not undergoing convergence (packet having immediateness priority) is improved by exchanging the order of a packet undergoing convergence (packet having necessity priority or low priority) with the order of a packet not undergoing convergence, wherein the order exchange of the packet is carried out within a packet sending time interval (col. 4: line 11 – col. 5: line 28; and col. 6: line 1 – col. 9: line 60).

Regarding claim 5, Maeno also discloses detecting an exit path in which a convergence notice signal is input (step A11, A12, A21; col. 7: lines 9-37), searching a portion including arranged packets of an exit path in which the convergence notice signal is not input (step A22, A23; step col. 7: line 38-61), in the predetermined range and just after a packet to be sent to the exit path; exchanging both the packets in the portion (step A24, A25; col. 7: line 64 – col. 8: line 40); and if a convergence notice signal is not input in a head packet after that, reading the packet

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normally and outputting the packet to the first or second output path (step A23; col. 9: lines 15-60).

Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 5 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: Claims are considered allowable when reading the claims none of the references of record singly or in combination disclose or suggest the combination limitations specified in the independent claims including detecting an exit path in which a convergence notice signal is input, searching a portion including arranged packets of an exit path in which the convergence notice signal is not input, in said predetermined range and just after a packet to be sent to said exit path; a third step of exchanging both the packets in said portion; and a fourth step of: if a convergence notice signal is not input in a head packet after that, reading the packet normally and outputting said packet to the first or second output path.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

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Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:


Kado (US 6,683,879); Amara et al (US 6,674,743); Chowdhury et al (US 6,631,136); Marisson (US 6,594,263); Isoyama et al (US 6,570,873); Elwalid et al (US 6,567,415); Briem (US 6,526,061); Shimonishi (US 6,330,223); Giroux (US 6,317,416); Walker et al (US 6,260,073); Ruszczyk (US 6,205,150); Li et al (US 5,583,792).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Van Kim T. Nguyen whose telephone number is 703-305-7692. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Douglas W. Olms can be reached on 703-305-4703. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

vkn


DOUGLAS OLMS
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2600